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# Security Council

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*Provisional*

**4596**th meeting

Thursday, 8 August 2002, 10.30 a.m.

New York

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| *President:* | Mr. Negroponte | (United States of America) |
| *Members:* | Bulgaria | Mr. Tafrov |
| | Cameroon | Mr. Chungong |
| | China | Mr. Wang Yingfan |
| | Colombia | Mr. Valdivieso |
| | France | Mr. Doutriaux |
| | Guinea | Mr. Boubacar Diallo |
| | Ireland | Mr. Corr |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Koonjul |
| | Mexico | Ms. Lajous |
| | Norway | Mr. Strømmen |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Gatilov |
| | Singapore | Mr. Mahbubani |
| | Syrian Arab Republic | Mr. Mekdad |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Eldon |

## Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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02-51328 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.*

**Expression of thanks to the retiring President**

**The President**: As this is the first open meeting of the Security Council for the month of August, I should like to take the opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of July 2002. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Greenstock for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**The President**: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and South Africa, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to Her Excellency Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa.

*At the invitation of the President, Ms. Dlamini Zuma (South Africa) took a seat at the Council table.*

**The President**: On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. She Okitundu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the Council table.*

**The President**: On behalf of the Council, I also extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Patrick Mazimpaka, Special Envoy of the President of Rwanda on the Great Lakes Region.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mazimpaka (Rwanda) took a seat at the Council table.*

**The President**: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to thank our special guests for having come so far at such short notice. They have shown great statesmanship by signing an Agreement that represents an important step towards ending a war that that has cost countless lives and produced immeasurable suffering. With the help of South African President Mbeki, the signatory heads of State have for the first time met to pledge to bring this difficult chapter in their history to a close. They should be applauded.

The Agreement signed in Pretoria on 30 July provides a real opportunity for progress. Members of the Council want to understand fully the provisions of the Agreement and the intentions of the parties to ensure that all those who will play a role in making the Agreement work understand their responsibilities and obligations. Implementation will be a difficult and complicated task that will require unswerving commitment by the parties and by the international community.

Having said that by way of introduction, I shall now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

**The Secretary-General**: I shall be brief this morning. Let me say how happy I am to see the representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda here this morning, as well as, of course, Minister Dlamini Zuma, representing South Africa, which co-facilitated this agreement.

I believe that the signing of the peace agreement between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in Pretoria on 30 July represents an important political milestone which could help pave the way towards a lasting resolution of one of Africa's most complex conflicts. The parties have indicated their determination to honour this agreement and to end the conflict. We, on our side, should do

whatever we can to assist them in implementing the agreement. I applaud President Mbeki for his important contribution to the agreement in his capacity as Chairman of the African Union.

The two presidents have committed themselves to achieving peace and, specifically, to working with each other to achieve it. That is very encouraging. We must now quickly approach the parties in a pragmatic manner and urge them to take the steps required to operationalize the agreement as soon as possible.

I believe that the international community must provide all necessary support to ensure the success of this initiative. The momentum established must be maintained and built upon. I hope this meeting of the Council can contribute to that. I have instructed the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to determine which actions it can take within its current mandate and resources to assist the parties to carry out the agreement. However, the parties need to be perfectly clear on the tasks to be performed and to provide the necessary information in order for MONUC to define its specific role.

The Secretariat is also looking forward to receiving a team of experts from South Africa — in fact, I think they have arrived today — to discuss together the support that the process requires and how we move forward from here. I therefore expect to revert to the Council in due course with specific recommendations for MONUC after the Secretariat undertakes intensive consultations with the parties concerned.

The presence with us today of the South African Foreign Minister, as well as of Mr. She Okitundu of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mr. Mazimpaka of Rwanda is particularly valuable because it enables you to engage directly with the Council and enables the Council to engage you on issues that are directly concerned with the implementation of the agreement. Of course, I look forward to a very serious dialogue not only here in the Council but also with the various United Nations departments. I think that reflects the value of the new partnership between the African Union and the United Nations.

I am now eager to listen to the Foreign Minister of South Africa and to the representatives of the parties so that we can gain a full and detailed understanding of this important agreement and this implementation as soon as possible.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa.

**Ms. Dlamini Zuma** (South Africa): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. Let me also express our sincere gratitude for inviting us to address the Council on an important development in our continent. I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts and contribution to bring about peace and stability throughout the African continent. The recent launch of the African Union has highlighted our commitment to peace and development in Africa. We believe that the United Nations can be an important partner as we rebuild our continent, especially using the principles enshrined in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Last week, the Presidents of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Rwandese Republic took an important step by signing a peace agreement on the withdrawal of the Rwandan troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the dismantling of the former Rwandan Army (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This peace agreement assumes greater significance in that it comes in the wake of the tremendous progress that was made by the Congolese people in the inter-Congolese dialogue, which was held in our country earlier this year.

This agreement is very important, and it is at the centre of the peace process. It therefore gives a strong signal of political will on the sides of both Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to expedite a peace process between themselves. It is very important that we all support and encourage the implementation of this agreement. We cannot be seen to be less than enthusiastic about it.

To understand the agreement before us, we must go back to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of 1999. In that agreement, there was a question on how to deal with the foreign forces that had come into the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Everyone acknowledged that the foreign troops would have to withdraw in order to allow the people of the country to decide on their future without any external interference. The problem remained of the presence in

the Democratic Republic of the Congo of the armed military groups such as Interahamwe and ex-FAR, which were implicated in the Rwandese genocide.

In the years since the signing of the Lusaka Agreement, it has become even more clear that the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo could not be resolved until the matter of the armed groups was addressed. We are all aware that these armed groups operate freely within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and not only continue to pose a real threat to the people of Rwanda but can destabilize the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself. We welcome the declared wish of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo not to have those armed groups utilize its territory for launching attacks against its neighbours. We also welcome the commitment of the Government of Rwanda to withdraw its forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo as soon as those military groups cease to be a threat to the people of Rwanda.

At the launch of the African Union, a crucial meeting was held when President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and President Paul Kagame of Rwanda met for the first time. The meeting was held in the presence of President Mbeki and Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who was accompanied by senior leadership of United Nations Secretariat and of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Follow-up meetings were later held with ministers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, together with MONUC. In this regard, we would like to pay tribute to MONUC for its role in supporting peace efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Despite its limited strength and the difficult conditions that prevail, MONUC has managed to carry out its duties.

The Durban meeting laid the basis for the peace agreement. It was where both President Kagame and President Kabila asked President Mbeki and Secretary-General Annan to act jointly as a third party guaranteeing the agreement.

From the outset we wish to make clear that the agreement signed between the two Governments is a reflection of their wishes and interests. Furthermore, it does not supplant the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of 1999 and subsequent agreements but, rather, complements all of them.

The need for this Agreement stems from the recognition that progress in establishing lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo cannot be registered without resolving the conflict between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

There is no doubt that the developments of the last month have created a political momentum that must be seized and supported by all actors concerned, including the international community. That momentum, in turn, requires that every one of us do everything necessary to achieve the targets set out in the programme of implementation. This Agreement has given the rare gift of hope to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to all the countries of the Great Lakes region. We cannot, therefore, be seen to have contributed to the slowing down of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and, indeed, in the rest of the Great Lakes region.

We therefore look forward to the discussions this morning as a step forward towards taking the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region to higher levels.

**The President**: I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Mr. She Okitundu** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, we wish to associate ourselves with earlier speakers in offering you our warmest congratulations and in saying how gratified our delegation is to see you presiding over the Security Council in this month of August 2002. We believe that your intellectual skills and your diplomatic talents, together with your lengthy experience of international relations, will ensure the success of the work of the Council this month.

We wish also to convey to your predecessor, Sir Jeremy Greenstock of the United Kingdom, our warm congratulations and our sincere thanks for having guided the work of the Security Council with a great deal of energy and skill last month.

We also wish thank you, Sir, for having convened this important meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which certainly once again has the merit of helping us better to evaluate the peace process that is under way and to welcome the recent and very significant

advances made to put an end to the war of aggression that has been waged against my country for more than four years now. We hope also that it will help to pave the way towards lasting peace for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for all the countries of the region.

The Security Council has just heard a comprehensive statement by Ms. Nkosazana Clarice Dlamini Zuma, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa. The Minister has clearly and eloquently described the Peace Agreement that was concluded at Pretoria on 30 July between our Government and that of the Republic of Rwanda, as well as the programme for implementation covering the withdrawal of Rwandese troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the dismantling of the former Rwandan army (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Minister has described what is at stake in the Peace Agreement and the prospects for success. We fully share her vision, and — as our head of State, Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, stated at the signing ceremony of the Agreement — the obligations and commitments undertaken by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo pursuant to this peace agreement will be scrupulously complied with.

Here we wish to extend our very sincere thanks to President Thabo Mbeki, his Government and the people of South Africa for their determination, and I would even say their obstinacy, which took us from Sun City to Pretoria by way of Durban, to ensure that peace prevails once again in the Great Lakes region.

We wish also to pay tribute to our regional organization, the African Union, which, through the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, was the first to highlight the useless and senseless nature of this war of aggression. The efforts of the interim Chairman of its Commission, Mr. Amara Essy, has always been, and remains, decisive in the quest to restore peace and calm to our region.

May I lastly thank Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of our universal Organization, for his important statement. We are very grateful to him for having lent his moral weight by endorsing the Pretoria Agreement. We wish in this connection to express our full appreciation for all of his endeavours, and especially for his commitment to tirelessly exploring all possibilities likely to bring about a successful and prompt conclusion of the peace process that began at Lusaka.

In order to settle the question of the war of aggression once and for all, since last year our Government has been in direct contact with the leaders of countries whose forces are illegally occupying our country, pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, which call for the holding of such meetings in order to establish the necessary relations of trust in order to promote the cause of peace.

For his part, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has tirelessly committed himself to this process, particularly in terms of organizing meetings with the Rwandese party, the most recent of which, at which he was present, took place in Durban, in parallel with the OAU/African Union Summit.

The Pretoria Agreement, which is basically bilateral and guaranteed by the third party, falls — as the South African Minister said just now — within the framework of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. In this regard, the Pretoria Agreement is likely greatly to facilitate and speed up the completion of the remaining phases provided for in the timetable for the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement.

The Pretoria Agreement is also in conformity with the provisions of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council calling for the orderly withdrawal of all foreign troops and in particular resolution 1341 (2001), whereby the Council, for the first time, called for, among other things, the elaboration of a plan and a precise timetable which would lead to the finalization of the total and orderly withdrawal of foreign troops, as well as for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) programmes.

With respect to the DDRRR process, the Democratic Republic of the Congo undertakes strictly to comply with its obligations under this Agreement, inter alia, by pursuing the process of the demobilization and disarmament of Rwandese combatants which began at Kamina and by extending it to other areas of the country under foreign occupation as the authority of the State is established there.

Moreover, we would like to express to the international community as a whole our trust in the fact that we will receive support from it in the simultaneous

process of the withdrawal of troops and repatriation, reintegration and resettlement of combatants in their countries of origin, in conformity with international law.

With respect to the withdrawal of foreign troops, it should be noted that the majority of the parties to the conflict had already submitted their plans to the Joint Military Commission and have commenced their withdrawal.

Among the countries that came to the assistance of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in defending its national sovereignty and its territorial integrity — countries that we wish once again to thank on behalf of the Republic for the sacrifice of their sons and daughters to the noble cause of truth, justice and dignity — Namibia has totally withdrawn, and Angola and Zimbabwe have repatriated a large number of their contingents.

As to the uninvited forces, withdrawal movements have been observed only on the part of Uganda and Burundi. Rwanda, for its part, has considerably increased its forces and remains the only country to be engaged in large-scale military operations on Congolese soil.

There will be tremendous rejoicing when the Congolese people, the third party and the international community are officially informed, in a few hours, of the withdrawal plan for Rwandese troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, pursuant to the programme of implementation of the Pretoria Agreement.

Another promising sign will be the beginning of the demilitarization of the city of Kisangani, pursuant to resolution 1304 (2000). This city, as we have stated before, must no longer be the symbol of the martyrdom of a whole nation. It must, rather, become the political and physical symbol of renewal and return to dignity for the whole of the Congolese people, the emblem of the hope for a better life for present and future generations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the same time, all illegal activities to exploit the natural resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which feed the continued war of aggression, must end. Our Government, which is fully cooperating with the group of experts set up for that purpose, will ensure that this is done.

The Agreement is certainly the most serious opportunity for peace since the beginning of the war of aggression on 2 August 1998. It provides a response — which we hope is adequate — to Rwanda's security concerns, although it is the Democratic Republic of the Congo that has been experiencing total insecurity for four years. The Agreement also envisages the restoration of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was gravely imperilled by the Rwandan presence. Finally, the Agreement embodies the ingredients for a return to normality for the countries and the peoples of the Great Lakes region.

We must succeed, but we must be helped to succeed. The international community, which welcomed the Pretoria Agreement, must invest in it tangibly and unstintingly, on either the bilateral or the multilateral level, to assist the two signatory parties and the third parties in their determination to end a conflict that has caused the deaths of more than 3 million people in four years.

For its part, the United Nations can help immediately, especially by formulating for its Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo a new concept of operations that would effectively activate phase III of its deployment and would both support the verification mechanism and enable it to participate in the execution structure that the third party will put in place, within the framework of the Pretoria Agreement.

Action is needed now. The situation — which continues to be fragile, as demonstrated by recent events in Kisangani and by the deadly skirmishes between the Rwandese Patriotic Army and Congolese combatants of Tutsi origin in the high plateaux of Kivu — may worsen. That would augur ill for the credibility of the United Nations as a whole. We must avoid that at all costs.

The improvement in the prospects for peace in the Great Lakes region enables us to look with more serenity to the process of reconciliation and national concord in our country. The political agreement for consensual management of the transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, concluded at Sun City, has made possible the reunification of more than 70 per cent of the national territory. Talks are now under way, on the one hand, with the signatory parties to the Sun City agreement and, on the other, with the other armed component, its dissidents and the

components of society and the unarmed opposition, in order to define the contours of an agreement that would be more consensual and inclusive. The essential here is that we must procrastinate no longer, but rather must decide to make headway on this issue. In that regard, we are convinced that the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Moustapha Niasse, will meet with success.

Those working to advance the transition will certainly be political leaders of all stripes, but also leaders representing religious faiths, the academic world, the media, private and public enterprise and civil society. Leaders dedicated to the moral values of governance, their greatest virtues remain disinterest and love of country.

As Mrs. Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted in her report to the Council, impunity remains one of the principal causes of human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Putting an end to such impunity is a fundamental requirement for the return to a durable peace in the region. The choice of transition leaders should take that requirement into account. Such an approach is in conformity with the recommendations in the High Commissioner's report, namely, strengthening the rule of law and the administration of justice, and the creation of mechanisms whereby all those responsible for human rights violations and for war crimes must answer for their acts. The creation of a truth and reconciliation commission on the South African model could provide an element of response.

We must do justice for the millions of Congolese dead, formulating concrete measures with a view to putting an end to impunity, compensating victims and preventing the resurgence of such acts.

The process of restoring peace and establishing and consolidating relations of trust must continue and be strengthened by increased credibility for the United Nations and the Security Council, for there is a risk of seeing crumble the whole edifice of the partnership that the Council has patiently built with the parties bound by the Lusaka Agreement.

The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) needs to review its operations, particularly with regard to the protection of civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, as the Council reaffirmed in resolution 1417 (2002). The Council must redefine the concept of MONUC's operations in order to enable it to properly carry out the mission conferred on it by the Pretoria Agreement.

MONUC must be given the means to enable it to operate and have unhindered access to needy populations. For example, it is indispensable that the MONUC team be authorized without further delay to have access to the locality of Minembwe in the high plateaux. It is also imperative that the reopening of the river network for humanitarian assistance and commercial trade between Kinshasa and Kisangani become a reality and that the city of Kisangani be accessible once river traffic is opened to trade in the reunified zones, pursuant to the Sun City agreement.

Here, I should like to pay tribute to our friends in MONUC, under the leadership of Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the quality of the work that they have done and for their total devotion to the cause of peace and the restoration of dignity to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their efforts deserve to be encouraged and supported.

For their part, the States of the region must supplement their efforts. First, it is urgent that the Democratic Republic of the Congo conclude with the Governments of Uganda and Burundi agreements similar to the Pretoria Agreement. The Government of Burundi has, in a timely manner, informed us of its intention to do this. Contacts have already been made at the highest level. We must translate into concrete action the good will expressed on both sides. Then we must sit down together and discuss our region's future. The international conference for peace, stability, security and development that we earnestly wish for should lay the basis for a new order.

The international conference could help the region's countries ensure the security of their States and of their populations so that no element can intervene to disrupt order and tranquillity, while at the same time conceiving, defining and fostering the creation and development of economic activities of common interest and, lastly, promoting and intensifying trade and the movement of persons and goods.

A new order at the regional level presupposes a new order at the national level. Processes of democratic transition are under way in our country and in Burundi. We remain certain that they will succeed.

Furthermore, we welcome the willingness expressed by the Rwandese authorities to hold elections in their country in the medium term. We ask the international community to assist that country's efforts so that it can restore internal peace and national concord.

In saying that, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo wishes to assure all its partners — in particular our brothers in neighbouring countries — f our fervent desire to live in perfect harmony with the whole world, in a spirit of tolerance, solidarity and frank cooperation. The Pretoria Agreement is the very foundation for restoring the trust that has been lost, on the basis of which we can together renew the bonds of friendship and good-neighbourliness that should govern our future relations.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo will never serve as a channel to sow discord and desolation in any country, in particular our neighbours. That is a sacred principle of our diplomacy, which we have always wished to be constructive and not subversive. The Democratic Republic of the Congo looks forward to the advent of a region where peace, security, justice and prosperity prevail.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the Special Envoy of the President of Rwanda on the Great Lakes Region.

**Mr. Mazimpaka** (Rwanda): It is my honour to congratulate you, Sir, as others who have spoken before me have done, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. In addition, allow me, through you, to extend our recognition to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for the way in which he conducted the affairs of the Council last month.

We have come to the Council today, at its invitation, to present what we believe is an unprecedented step towards the resolution of the conflict that has afflicted Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the main, and the Great Lakes Region as a whole, since the signing of the Lusaka Agreement for a ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in 1999. The Pretoria Agreement provides solutions for what up to now have been intractable problems in the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement.

The problem of the forces that carried out genocide and then relocated to bases in Zaire, later the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has preoccupied the Council and the signatories for a long time, without their having found a clear solution. Throughout, the Council continued to ur, e Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to work together to resolve the root causes of the conflict, that is, to find how to dissuade the former Rwandan Army (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe forces from carrying out attacks on Rwanda from bases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Today we firmly believe that our plan, worked out with the help of the President of the Republic of South Africa and with the encouragement and support of the Secretary-General, has a chance to succeed. We appeal to the Council to do its utmost to assist us along this path.

At the signing ceremony in Pretoria, South Africa, of what is now known as the Pretoria Agreement or the Peace Agreement between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda, President Paul Kagame characterized the Agreement as very important. He said that because the Agreement addresses two core issues that underlie the conflict: first, how to resolve the problem of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe and, secondly, the withdrawal of all former forces from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. By addressing those two issues, the Agreement paves the way for peace and stability, which have eluded our respective countries for a long time.

Those familiar with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, including the Council, know that we have been painfully aware of the poor record of our performance in the area of the disarmament, demobilization and repatriation of the armed groups. As crucial as that part of the Lusaka Agreement may be, the parties have so far failed to make any headway in effecting any meaningful disarmament and, hence, in reducing the security threat to affected countries, principally Rwanda. What the Pretoria Agreement brings to the process is a solemn commitment by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to track, assemble and disarm ex-FAR and Interahamwe, in collaboration with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the Joint Military Commission (JMC) and the third party. Rwanda, in turn, undertook to withdraw its troops from the Democratic Republic of

the Congo as soon as this process gets under way and is judged to be irreversible.

Let me recall here that Rwanda's commitment to the repatriation and reintegration of combatants has withstood the test of time, numbers and adverse conditions. Since 1994, a large number of members of the former Armed Forces of Rwanda have rejoined the military service in our country or been demobilized like any members of the national forces. The militias who accompanied these forces in the wars in the Congo have also come home in large numbers and have been resettled into normal civilian life. The now-well-documented 2,000 captives of the 2001 war in the north-west of Rwanda have by now been settled, and some of them have actually formed a group to carry out sensitization work among those who are still in Congo, using the themes of national unity and reconciliation, which they have witnessed in the country. Recently, this group accompanied MONUC to Benin to help in confidence-building among the small group of combatants who had indicated that they wanted to go home. Unfortunately, for that particular operation, the heavy presence of detractors of this process made it impossible for the group to go home, although they had been waiting for two months to be repatriated. We hope that in the future such groups will not be exposed to so-called political leaders and other agents who interfere with their wish to return home.

Through the work of MONUC and the JMC we are all aware, or will have an idea, about where the ex-Far and Interahamwe are operating from in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and how they are organized. Indeed, it is on that basis that assembly areas were planned. Those plans were approved by the signatories to the Lusaka Agreement. We need MONUC's assistance to make the assembly areas operational and secure. The repatriation exercise will require more resources, particularly for transport and resettlement. The Government of Rwanda will continue to do its part in ensuring that this process is successful.

Rwanda is grateful for all the assistance the United Nations has provided in our trying times. We hope that the Council will see the resolution of the conflict in the region as a shared challenge. Rwanda is grateful to President Thabo Mbeki and the rest of the leadership of the Republic of South Africa for their commitment to peace in our region. Equally, we warmly welcome the commitment of President Mbeki as Chairman of the African Union (AU), as well as that of the Secretaries-General of the AU and of the United Nations, to see the Agreement implemented as signed. We appeal for continued support for all the parties involved in the conflict, as this effort alone cannot resolve all the outstanding problems — such as the need to work out an all-inclusive agreement and to achieve the withdrawal of all other foreign forces.

On this occasion, Rwanda fully recognizes the problems caused by the presence and activities of our nationals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is why we salute and welcome the decision of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to negotiate this Agreement, as well as the leadership demonstrated by President Joseph Kabila in signing the Pretoria Agreement. In this spirit, we believe that all the other outstanding issues should find solutions through a sincere and pragmatic exchange among the countries of our region.

Allow me to conclude my remarks by reiterating the commitment President Paul Kagame made on behalf of the people of Rwanda on the occasion of the signing of the Peace Agreement in Pretoria at the end of last month.

> "Rwanda is ready to fulfil its part of the obligations as agreed in this Memorandum of Understanding. We are going to sign. We stand ready to work with you, our African brothers and sisters, and to work with the rest of the international community so as to bring about peace and security, which are very important to the people to Rwanda, the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the whole people of Africa."

**The President**: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list for this portion of the meeting this morning. The Security Council will continue the consideration of this item on its agenda following the adjournment of the open meeting, whereupon we will enter into a private meeting. But before adjourning this portion of the meeting, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his presence in having joined us this morning.

*The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.*